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INSIDE:

The Boys & Girls Homes
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Linemen in College
A model program

A Citizen Soldier's Story
Learning to cope with wartime

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
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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to 350,000 homes, farms and businesses in North Carolina. The 27 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

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
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10 COLLEGE FOR LINEMEN

The Nash Community College program has become a national model—the perfect training ground to help fill the growing need for linemen in our country.

12 A CITIZEN SOLDIER'S STORY

Shannon Carroll and his family balance military duty in wartime with their private lives and commitment to community. Carroll is one of 23,000 members of the Army National Guard in North Carolina.

18 NOT EXACTLY FLYING COLORS

Stories of how you barely made a passing grade and then went on to mend your ways. Most of you anyway.



ON THE COVER

The Boys & Girls Homes in Columbus County have been nurturing young people for 50 years. See pages 14–15.

departments

First Person	4	Marketplace	32, 34
How we contribute to North Carolina's prosperity.		Joyner's Corner	33
More Power to You	8	Carolina Compass	35
Bringing high-speed Internet to rural America.		Carolina Gardens	38
Carolina Country Store	26	Energy Cents	40
You're From Carolina Country If... ..	28	Classified Ads	41
Tar Heel Lessons	30	Carolina Kitchen	42
Riptides and flower pot friends.			

IT MADE A DIFFERENCE

The Boys & Girls Homes have provided a learning shelter for 50 years.



How we contribute to North Carolina's prosperity

By Frederick A. Tedder



Our state leaders work continually to attract new businesses and employers to our state, and the electric cooperatives actively support their efforts. Landing a new business in North Carolina makes headlines, but rarely do we read about another critical fuel that keeps our economic engine running dependably: those businesses that continue to serve and continue to operate through economic boons and busts.

For more than 60 years, North Carolina's electric cooperatives have maintained a steady presence in the communities we serve. A few months ago, the 27 cooperatives commissioned an independent study to determine just how profound our impact is on our state's economy. The results astounded even us. Here are a few highlights:

- Electric cooperatives pump about \$1.63 billion per year into the state's economy, investing over \$13 million in the 93 counties we serve.
- These dollars multiply in their impact as they make their way through the state's economy, spurring income, employment and investments. The overall contribution by electric cooperatives, including this multiplier effect, amounts to a whopping \$2.18 billion annually.
- We employ more than 2,500 people and pay more than \$93 million in wages and salaries.
- We pay about \$57.8 million annually in state and local taxes.
- We return \$22.5 million in dividends annually to members. Also known as "capital credits," these are margins that remain after a cooperative has met its financial requirements.
- More than \$7 million in cooperative financing has funded industrial parks, small business incubator programs and other business-related efforts.
- More than \$1 million per year supports public schools and colleges.
- More than \$2.2 million assists police, fire and ambulance services, youth organizations, 4-H, Relay for Life, county fairs and other local initiatives.
- Over \$2.6 million provides energy efficiency in the form of housing rehabilitation and assistance, equipment rebates and low-interest loans.

About 55 percent of our direct community spending supports local industrial and business development that provides employment and creates goods and services. Programs include low-interest loans and business opportunity grants, including the zero-interest Rural Economic Development Loans available to us through the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. In the past 10 years, cooperatives contributed \$573 million to local business and industrial development via these programs.

Cooperatives maintain close relationships with businesses that rely heavily on electric power. These are known as "key accounts." Among the assistance we provide to key accounts are energy audits and management, time-of-use rate structures and special project support.


Funding and services also go to county and municipal economic development commission projects, tourism authorities, water and sewer systems, shell buildings and assisting existing businesses to expand.

Electric cooperatives are known for generously supporting education at all levels: college and community college scholarships, as well as general support for K-12, vocational and college programs. A longtime popular program is our Rural Electric Youth Tour in which cooperatives each spring select deserving high school juniors to spend an educational week in Washington, D.C. Our Bright Ideas grants fund teachers whose innovative instructional projects are not funded by local school boards. Since it began in 1994, we have awarded more than \$4 million in Bright Ideas grant money to North Carolina's teachers to sponsor 3,500 projects teaching more than 700,000 students. Many cooperatives provide direct assistance to local community colleges, and employees and board members serve on their local boards of trustees.

Many co-ops offer a "round-up" program whereby members may round up their monthly electricity payment to the next highest dollar and designate the difference for an independent fund that routinely accepts applications and makes cash donations to community service organizations and families in need. Co-ops directed more than \$1.1 million to these recipients in 2004.

And our employees donate about 7,000 volunteer hours per year to local organizations and causes.

Since our inception more than six decades ago, our collaborative efforts and caring for one another have blazed this trail of prosperity for our members and our local communities. At the end of the day, what matters most are jobs, decent wages, education and training opportunities, youth programs, and local support that enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve.

Oh, and we will continue to provide you with affordable and reliable electric power, too. 

Frederick A. Tedder is a member of the board of directors of Brunswick EMC, which serves more than 70,000 members in Brunswick, Columbus and parts of Bladen and Robeson counties. He also chairs the executive committee of the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives.

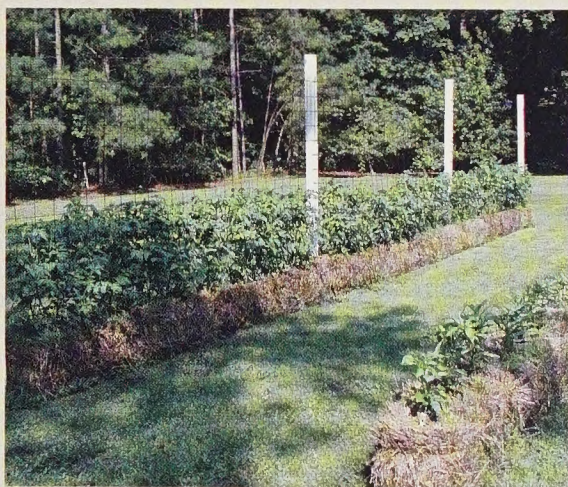
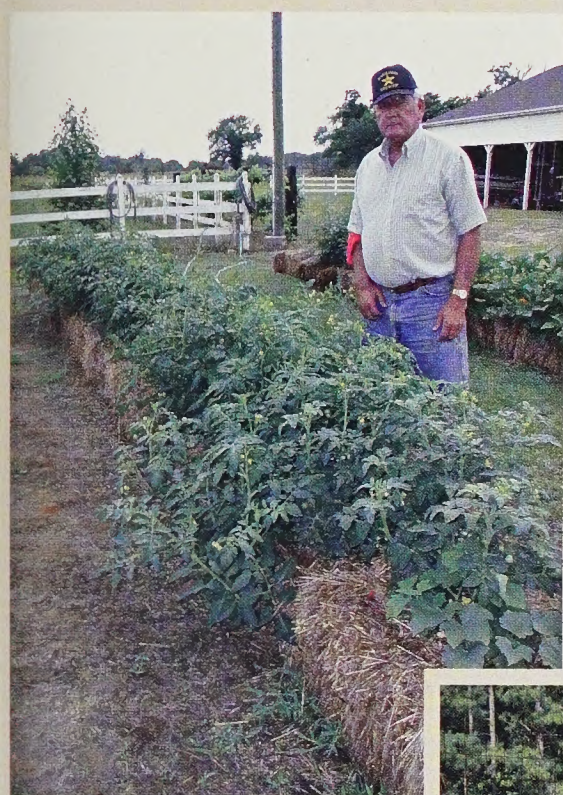
*For a free copy of the report, "Electric Cooperatives & the North Carolina Economy," send us a message:
E-mail: editor@carolinacountry.com Phone: (919) 875-3137*

Believer in bales

I had almost given up soil gardening due to limited time and getting older, but after reading the article on bale gardens [March 2006], I decided to give it a try.

My husband was a true skeptic, but he brought home the bales and helped me set up. What a truly enjoyable learning experience this has been for both of us. He is now a true believer and I have my garden back!

*Sandy Harrison
Hertford, N.C. and Virginia Beach, Va.*



Kent Rogers, who in our March magazine explained how to make a bale garden, sent these photos in July. One shows his own row of tomatoes and peppers. The other shows his dad in Willow Spring, who has had several strokes and has limited use of his right side. He set up 20 of his own bales this year.



Getting dirty: good for all of us

Nothing says summer more than a good ol' mud puddle. When there is a summer downpour, our yard has a few spots that retain water. My children head straight for the puddle as soon as the rain has stopped. My youngest, Emma, is a puddle lover at the tender age of 1. I spent the next few days cleaning mud out of her hair and ears. Oh well, you are young only once, and getting a little dirty now and again is good for all of us.

Kirsten Elks / Ayden / Pitt & Greene EMC

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Hatteras vacation



My grandson Noah Revels, 3, on vacation on Hatteras Island. He's so happy that he's floating in air. He lives in Perquimans County.

Ruth Mengel / Hertford / Albemarle EMC

Correction rat-cheer

Under the section "You Know You're From Carolina Country if . . ." I saw the header "to having running water meant your brothers running back and forth to the spring." [July 2006] Since I had submitted that, but someone else's name was under it, I first thought that someone else had come up with the same idea. Then when I read the list under her name, I realized that the list was the one that I had submitted and that you had given credit to the wrong person.

The "runners" refer to my two brothers, Steve and Clayton Ballard. It was my granny Dolly McDonald who called "soo heifer." When I was young, we had corn meal or coffee gravy for breakfast more than once. And I remember pulling rag weeds for my granny's hogs.

The list was submitted in a sense of fun and deepest respect for the traditions of these wonderfully intelligent, hard-working and down-to-earth mountain people. "Rat-cheer" and "ant-chew" are expressions that I have occasionally heard used in this region, passed down from old-timers. Many words in the mountain vernacular were passed down from the original "King's English," but I doubt that the above two are part of them.

Sue Brewer / Hayesville

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WildBlue brings high-speed Internet to rural communities

By Jennifer Taylor



In a day and age when keeping pace with the latest technology is a must, what are your options in rural, remote areas? Dial-up Internet service? Not anymore.

Today you need high-speed “broadband” Internet service.

But a recent report from the e-NC Authority says that five counties in North Carolina still have less than 50 percent access to high-speed Internet service, and 21 other counties have less than 70 percent access. With support from the state’s Touchstone Energy cooperatives, the e-NC Authority works to promote technology-based economic development in these areas. “As technology needs and offerings constantly evolve,” the report says, “North Carolinians will continue to need support systems working to develop broadband networks and the skills to use them. Broadband is clearly related to economic well-being.”

Sixty years ago when rural North Carolina lacked electric power, communities formed cooperatives to bring that service to the country. Today, cooperatives are involved in bringing high-speed Internet service to those areas as well.

Whether you live in the mountains of Madison County or the agricultural acres of Greene County, high-speed Internet is now available to virtually every home in America through a service known as WildBlue. Working with electric and telephone cooperatives, the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC) installed the first WildBlue service in June 2005. WildBlue delivers broadband satellite Internet service to customers at speeds up to 30 times faster than a dial-up connection.

So how does this satellite Internet service work? Similar to satellite television, WildBlue links your home or office to the Internet through a 26-inch satellite dish and small modem. Installation typically takes approximately three hours, and then you are ready to begin surfing the Internet

at broadband speeds. Minimum computer system requirements are needed; however, most computers meet the minimum standards. (See box for information on specific requirements.) A clear view of the southwest sky is necessary to ensure a satellite signal. No phone lines are required.

WildBlue customers can use the same Web browsers, pages and e-mail sites that they may have used with dial-up, but at a much higher speed. WildBlue satellite Internet includes e-mail accounts, anti-virus software, newsgroups, Web space for personal Web pages, and free round-the-clock technical support. Download speeds with WildBlue begin at 512 Kbps (kilobits per second) and go up to 1.5 Mbps (megabits per second) depending on package selections. A variety of service packages are offered, including a value plan for \$49.95 a month, which includes 512Kbps download speeds and up to 128 Kbps upload speeds.

NRTC is one of WildBlue’s major investors along with Liberty Media. NRTC was the exclusive distributor of WildBlue satellite Internet during the first months of service and still serves the majority of subscribers. NRTC represents the advanced telecommunications and information technology interests of more than 1,300 rural utilities and affiliates in 47 states.

WildBlue service has made it possible for thousands of people living in rural areas to share digital photos with friends and family over the Internet and facilitates school children with homework and research by allowing them to connect at broadband speeds. Trevor Tuttle, a student in rural Colorado, remarked, “We use high-speed Internet at school all of the time...when we go home, it would take us all night to do the rest of our work because we only had dial-up.”

For information and pricing on installation, contact touchnc.net, a Touchstone Energy Partner, at (877) 908-6824. Details about WildBlue are available at www.wildbluenc.net

Compatible operating systems:

PC/ Windows: Windows 98SE, ME, 2000 or XP

Macintosh: OS 10.2 or higher

Minimum computer system requirements:

PC/ Windows: 300 MHz or faster processing speed, minimum 128 MB Random Access Memory (RAM). 100 MB of hard drive space and an Ethernet card are required.

Macintosh: 300 MHz or faster processing speed, 128 MB Random Access Memory (RAM). 100 MB of hard drive space and an Ethernet card are required.

Protect your computer during storms

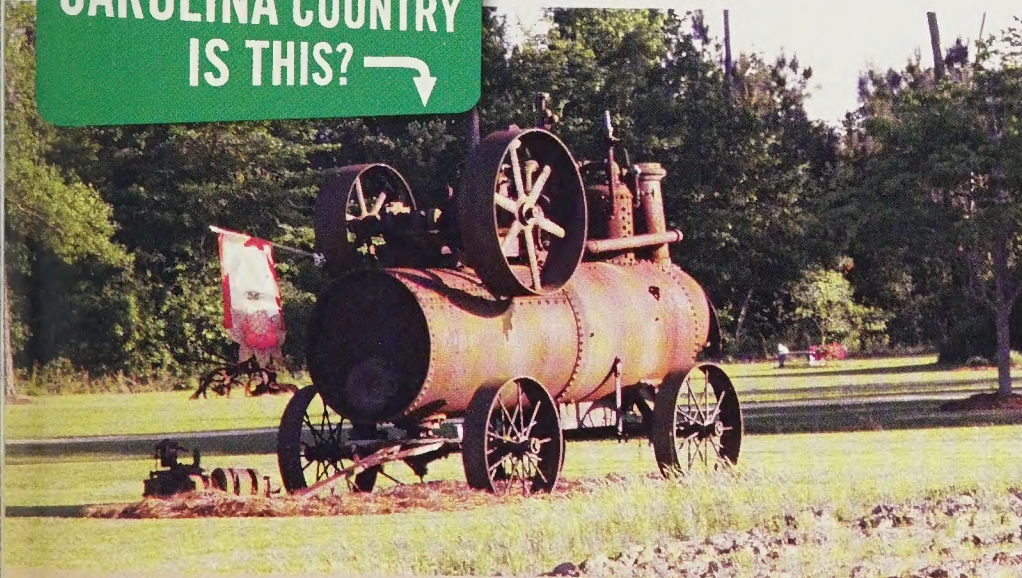
Especially during storm season, you should take precautions to ensure that your computer data is backed-up and protected.

Rescuecom, a computer repair and support business, suggests that you have a disaster recovery plan in place before an evacuation call comes along. Rescuecom offers the following tips:

- **Back-up Your Data.** Data should be backed-up on a daily basis. There are various methods of back-up, including tape, portable hard drives, CDs, flash drives and remote back-up systems. Particularly during a disaster, remote back-up, which easily allows data to be replicated in a separate location often out of state, is ideal. It is also helpful to keep truly essential files on a portable hard drive or portable flash drive that can be removed quickly.
- **Shut Your System Down.** When the evacuation order comes, be sure to shut down and unplug your system as directed by manufacturer and installer requirements.
- **Identify a Designated Data Protector.** Particularly for businesses, it is important that one individual be responsible for securing the company's data when a disaster occurs.
- **Evacuate Your Computer/Server.** If time and circumstances allow, take your computer/server with you to ensure it remains secure.
- **Use a Quality Surge Protector With Uninterruptible Power Supply Battery Back-Up.** If you choose to leave your system in place, be sure to use a high quality surge protector combined with an uninterruptible power supply battery backup to protect computers from electric irregularities that could ruin circuitry.
- **If Damage Is Done, Call a Professional.** If disaster strikes and your computer or server is clearly damaged, ask a reputable computer services company to assess the damage and see what is recoverable.

For more information, call (800) RESCUE7.

WHERE IN
CAROLINA COUNTRY
IS THIS? →



July Winner:

The scene in the July magazine showed Rip Rippon's fishing boat, "Miss Lisa," coming into Mann's Harbor to dock near Benny's Seafood on Old Ferry Dock Rd. Gayle Grubbs told us that she "rode a ferry to school for some months about 16 years ago when the bridge to the mainland was damaged by a barge." She also mentioned that this was a favorite swimming hole and that "my great-grandmother lived in an old house that hung over the canal and it was later turned into the fish house."

Correct answers were numbered and the \$25 winner chosen at random was Helen Barnes of Jackson, a member of Roanoke Electric.



Pix by Ric



Your co-ops at work in Raleigh

Above, top: State Rep. Richard Morgan (left) of Moore County meets with Randolph EMC director Frank Kennedy (right) of Moore County and Randolph EMC General Manager Dale Lambert.

Above, bottom: State Sen. Charles Albertson of Duplin County in his office hosting delegates from Four County EMC.

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by August 8 with your name, address, phone number and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our September issue, will receive \$25.



Today's power line technicians go to college

By Susan Mahne Wallace



Electric cooperative linemen learning overhead line construction techniques at the Nash Community College training field.

Seasoned hard-working Americans and recent graduates are finding it more difficult to develop a career without knowing whether or not the job market will work in their favor. One exception to this trend can be seen in the world of the electric lineman, sometimes referred to as a power line technician. This name change reflects the increasing technological requirements of this occupation that involves working with the all-important interwoven grid of electrical conductors, switching and monitoring devices, along with protective relaying and metering equipment.


The nation's industries and citizens depend on our electrical infrastructure operating at its optimum. To operate effectively, the electric distribution system must be maintained by people who know what they're doing. It is not possible to clear a fault on a 34,500-volt power line via video conference. It is also not possible to repair a damaged transformer operating at 765,000 volts via the Internet. Imagine trying to remove a frozen limb that has fallen onto a distribution line without capable hands. It takes human beings properly trained and on site to physically perform the necessary work. It is safe to say that the job of the power line technician will not be exported overseas any time soon.

A lineman career is not for everyone. The electric lineman requires physical stamina and the ability to focus on the job as though life itself depended on it. Add in the pressure of performing the most difficult tasks during extreme inclement weather. But because the electric lineman receives continuous training throughout the year in the technical aspects of the job, with safety as paramount importance, there are actually fewer linemen injured on the job than in less demanding occupations, such as farming and manufacturing. Today's linemen are equipped with bucket trucks, state-of-the-art personal protective equipment, specialized tools and monitors. In the electrical distribution business,

training, safety and proper equipment make all the difference.

Working environments can encompass extremes of temperature, hurricanes, blizzards and ice storms; however, most line technicians will admit there is nothing else they would rather be doing because this is when they are at peak performance. Linemen enjoy the fulfillment that comes with a hard day's work and a strong sense of accomplishment. When the storms do come, the lineman is likened to a good samaritan—he or she gets your electricity flowing again so you can go back to life as normal.

National Public Radio (NPR) has reported on the growing need for linemen in our country. They estimated that within the next five years, half of the nation's 400,000 utility workers will be eligible for retirement. NPR also stated that an experienced lineman can potentially earn \$100,000 per year with overtime pay.

Nash Community College, located in Rocky Mount, offers the only comprehensive lineman training program in the state. NCC's electric lineman technology program consists of classroom instruction, hands-on line construction training, electrical theory, basic math and communication skills, power generation, transmission and distribution concepts, and of course, climbing poles. The Electric Lineman Academy awards students a Third Class Electric Lineman Certificate in 12 weeks. The academy includes 400 hours of combined classroom and construction training, and upon completion, the student is qualified for employment as an entry-level line technician. Students completing the certificate have the option of continuing their education leading to a diploma or an Associate Degree in Electric Lineman Technology. Students can continue their education at NCC through on-line courses, or through cooperative agreements with other community colleges. NCC is offering two Electric Lineman Academies. The first academy starts Aug. 15, and the second academy will begin Jan. 8, 2007. 

Susan Mahne Wallace is a public relations specialist with Nash Community College.

The North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives has partnered with Nash Community College over the past 10 years in providing co-op employees the opportunity to earn certificates, diplomas and the Associate Degree in Electric Lineman Technology. The partnership has served as a model for line worker training throughout the nation. For more information on the program or how to register, contact Bob Schubauer, NCC's coordinator for Electric Lineman Technology training, by e-mail at bschubauer@nashcc.edu or by calling (252) 451-8427.

We discovered the "Secret" to a smooth silhouette...

World's most comfortable bra eliminates bra bulge and makes you look 10 pounds thinner—*Bra-vo!*

Bulky fabrics, pinching hooks, unsightly seams, back aches, bra lines, bad fit—what crazy person invented the conventional bra anyway! Tired of dealing everyday with unflattering and cumbersome bras, Amanda Kennedy, a former actress and model, has finally perfected a comfortable flattering bra for real women. It's the end of the line for visible bra lines and the dreaded back bulge—two big fashion faux pas. Amanda designed the ingenious Sassybax™, a cure for the most common problems of old fashioned bras. The Sassybax™ seamless stretch material is

made of super smooth microfiber that hugs your body in a slimming silhouette. This fiber will make you look sleeker and thinner as it smoothes and softens any unsightly back bulges.

It's amazing that an actress like Amanda who spent so much time getting noticed invented a product that is meant to be invisible. She spent 11 years guest starring in such shows as *Cheers*, *Remington Steele*, *Dallas* and *Hart to Hart*, but as she tiptoed into her 40's, she realized that her clothes didn't look so sleek anymore. Her uncomfortable bra accentuated every bulge.

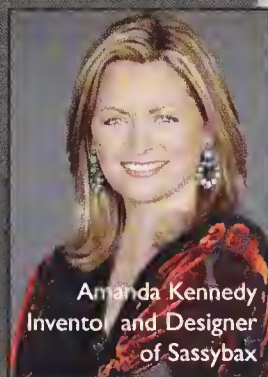
Back bulge is not a woman's fault—

it's the bra. Amanda poured herself into helping greater womanhood, not those few who may be blessed with a near perfect shape. Her inspiration came from control top panty hose that Amanda cut, clipped and formed into her first prototype. Then she redesigned a model in the super-soft microfiber that felt like wearing nothing at all, but still offered excellent support even when her full figured DD sized friends tried it on. Now the fashion world is abuzz with Sassybax. It's been raved about by *The View*, *Good Morning America*, *CBS News* and *FOX News*. You may have read the great reviews in some prominent publications. The "before and after" video on *Good Morning America* was startling. The host was quoted as saying with Sassybax, "She's completely line free, all the lumps and bumps are gone, she looks terrific."

These Sassybax stretch bras have no hooks, provide incredible comfortable support and most importantly a smooth

"I think I've found a new wardrobe staple that I could wear day and night. Thanks. And good luck with your line; it's well needed."

Vanessa Williams, actress, singer
and former Miss America



Amanda Kennedy
Inventor and Designer
of Sassybax

A.



B.

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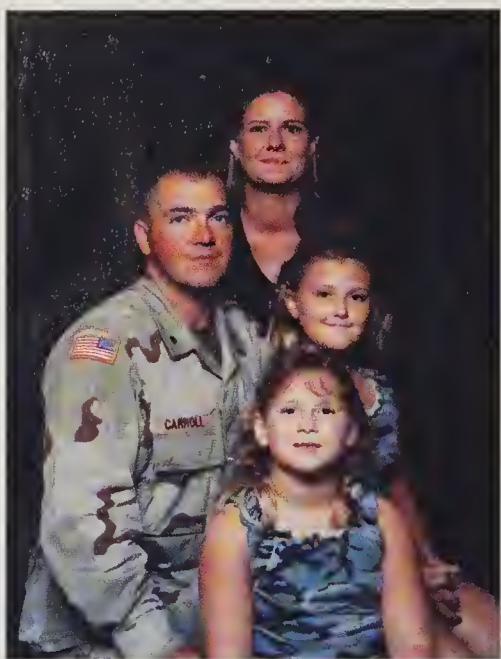
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Wake Electric lineman Shannon Carroll with his wife, Bridgette, and their daughters, Alex, 10, and Nickie, 7.

Shannon Carroll:

A Citizen Soldier's Story

By Ashley Andrews

The first time in his life that Shannon Carroll stepped out of Wake County was in the spring of 2004. He was on his way to Iraq. His wife, Bridgette, remembers watching him leave in an Army National Guard van. "Once he got

think it." Many nights she lay awake until 3 a.m. and cried herself to sleep.

Bridgette eventually called an army counselor for advice and soon began talking with other wives whose husbands were deployed. "There we would be on the phone at 3 a.m. talking and eating ice cream: I couldn't sleep, they couldn't sleep."

Holidays were worse. In addition to missing their youngest daughter's kindergarten and first year of school, Shannon missed Christmas 2004. Plus, they didn't have his usual overtime pay from Wake Electric that they always used for presents. Bridgette placed Shannon's picture on the Christmas tree above the few presents they had. Christmas Day, she remembered, she just "quit." She sat down in their living room unable to move. She couldn't help her daughters unwrap presents or pick up afterwards. A few weeks later, Bridgette had a heart attack. She was 31.


Having been healthy all her life, Bridgette said, the heart attack was due entirely to stress. Shannon was flown home on emergency leave. Bridgette was released from the hospital to greet him at Raleigh-Durham International airport on Valentine's Day. Less than three weeks later, Bridgette remembers sitting on the RDU parking deck for more than two hours trying to watch his plane leave. She watched plane after plane take off wondering which one was carrying her husband back to Iraq.

Once he became part of a military family, Shannon realized that he was no longer a citizen soldier, but a full-time soldier. "There is really no such thing as a citizen soldier anymore," he said. "If you join the National Guard right now you are a soldier—that's plain and simple."

Enrolling in the Army National Guard was an extension of his passion for community service and helping people. As a lineman and service technician for Wake Electric, the very nature of his work involves helping people by extending power to their homes, ensuring their electrical safety, and restoring power if it ever goes out.

When Shannon returned from duty overseas in the winter of 2005, he continued his activities with the fire department and the basketball team. He is still eligible to be recalled to duty.

WRAL TV News in Raleigh recently featured Shannon and Bridgette Carroll's story on its program "Focal Point: Citizen Soldier."

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives salute and express deep gratitude to Shannon Carroll, James Bledsoe of Blue Ridge Electric, Kelly Ritter of Randolph Electric, their families, and all of the men and women who have been deployed overseas on behalf of our country. 

Ashley Andrews will graduate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill this winter with a degree in public relations and a concentration in art and African-American history. This summer she is working with the Corporate Communications Department of North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation.

in that van and headed to the airport," she said recently, "he belonged to the government."

In a sense, Shannon Carroll still belongs to the government. In private life, he's the father of two daughters, a volunteer firefighter in the Bunn area, a youth basketball coach, and a lineman and service technician with the Touchstone Energy cooperative Wake Electric. But he's also a member of the Army National Guard, eligible to be called to duty and deployed whenever and wherever the Army says he's needed.

The Army National Guard in North Carolina is one of the largest units in the country with approximately 23,000 "citizen soldiers." The Guard used to require its soldiers to serve one weekend a month and two weeks during the summer. However, recent obligations of the U.S. all-volunteer army often have extended Guard service to overseas deployments lasting more than a year.

Seven months after enlisting in the Army National Guard in the fall of 2003, Shannon was called to active duty. For the next seven months he went through basic training. Then he served 11 months in Iraq at a camp guarding Iraqi prisoners. The prisoners had committed crimes ranging from theft and murder to attacking coalition military forces.

Back home, Bridgette and their daughters, Nickie, 7, and Alex 10, faced the difference between life as a normal community family and life as a military family. "It was a really hard thing to do," she said, "to make that transition from, 'He's off being a soldier this weekend, but he'll be back,' to 'He's off being a soldier, but he's not coming home.'"

Bridgette adapted from sharing the responsibilities of family life to being the sole caregiver of their daughters. Their marriage had been very much a partnership. They shared household chores, rearing their daughters, cooking meals, paying bills. When Shannon left, so did the partnership.

Bridgette thought at first she wasn't affected by Shannon's deployment. But soon she realized that she was deeply worried. "If you see that car pull up in the driveway," she said, "it's not going to be good news. So you worry about it and

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LIFE AT THE Boys and Girls Homes of North Carolina

An excerpt from the new book, “It Made a Difference to That One: The Realization of a Dream to Save Needy Children Through Boys and Girls Homes of North Carolina.”

“...had it not been
for the Home we
would have never
made it in life.”

Living the dream at Boys and Girls Homes was much like living in the “average” American home, as much as it could be. It was intended to be that way! The feeling was that the children who came to the Homes should be given every opportunity to live as normal a lifestyle as could be provided.

The cottages were designed and managed much like a typical home, containing a living area, dining area, kitchen, laundry, recreation room and bedrooms. The founders did not want the cottages to be dorm-like or set up like penal facilities. And the adults were called “house parents” or in today’s vernacular, “teaching parents”—with the emphasis on “parents.” The routines were similar to those of a typical home, with the children having set times for family-style meals, study, recreation, sleeping, waking, and most of all, chores.

As the cottages were constructed, several of the first “parents” in those homes were retired grandmotherly ladies who were responsible for up to sixteen young men. Along with the

counselors, they were many things to the boys including mother, father, grandparent, friend, etc.

When one listens to the alumni of the Homes talk about their house parents, you can sense both a fondness and appreciation for the firmness the “parents” demonstrated as they watched over them. One former resident wrote,

“My brother...and I were residents at the home back in 1966, and we were there for about five years. At the time we thought it was kind of rough, but as we have had the time and years to reflect back on our time there, we both agree that had it not been for the Home we would have never made it in life. I will never forget the wonderful people I was so fortunate to become acquainted with while there. The people of North Carolina are so very lucky to have such a place as the Boys and Girls Home that their children can go to because it really turns out some of the finest citizens this country will ever know. I am thankful for the memories!”

Pictured above: A group photo taken of the children, including some of the first girls to be a part of the program. Pictures in that day always required getting dressed up.

Many alumni express similar sentiments. Often they return to the Homes with their families to share that part of their lives. One former resident wrote this:

"I was in the Jaycee Cottage. At the time, I did not want to be there, as I was placed there against my will. As I grew older, I realized that being there at the Boys Home (as it was called then) was the best place in the world for me to be. I would imagine the House Parents at that time...have long retired. I learned a lot from those two people, and admire them for the contribution, as well as the sacrifices they made on the kids' behalf. I'd love to visit there and show my kids the things I remember. From the pecan trees, to the horse ranch, to the big lake, it is truly a nice place, from what I remember."

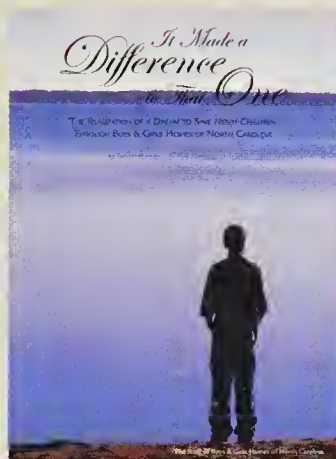
The children endeared themselves to the house parents as well. A former parent wrote:

"Lately, I have found myself wondering about the boys that my husband and I cared for as house parents in the JC Cottage. So I looked to see if Boys and Girls Home of NC had a website and was delighted to find it. I see that my boy...was there for nine years. He was such a sweet child. I was not surprised at his...success. He used to come in my back door at the JC Cottage (from the Lions Cottage). I would hear his astounding voice, clear back into the laundry room, break into a divine spiritual song. Bless his heart! Yes, I have many beautiful memories with my boys. I had to make sure that every one of them had a homemade birthday cake and small present. They would be overjoyed! Most of them had never even had a birthday cake, much less a present at that time. We also had a great time making Halloween costumes for the boys. We would go over to the Country Store, pick up bits and pieces and throw them together at the sewing machine, and most times, my boys would win the costume contest. I remember little (name withheld). We found him a tux with tails and made him a top hat, decorated with silver glitter. He took first place for his age group. Then there was (name withheld) we made into Frankenstein. I still love looking at my old pictures of them. I just wonder if they ever think of us."



Not only did the children participate in athletics at school, they enjoyed participating on campus teams in intramural activities. In this photo, the boys have an afternoon basketball practice.

The Homes, the book



A new book reveals the vision, hard work and heart behind a comprehensive care program for at-risk children.

As told in "It Made a Difference to That One: The Realization of a Dream to Save Needy Children Through Boys and Girls Homes of North Carolina," the dream came to A.D. Peacock, an undertaker in Whiteville, who in the 1940s was deeply touched by the feelings of loss children experienced

when they lost a parent. He saw that in addition to emotional pain, a death could mean financial devastation or leaving a surviving parent so distraught or fallen that he or she became unable to parent.

Sometimes both parents would die, leaving the child an orphan. After witnessing firsthand an especially loveless family with seven hungry children, Peacock was galvanized. His commitment to help such families sparked the involvement of civic club members. Boys Home was born in 1956, when the first five boys were admitted to the Lake Waccamaw campus. In the 1970s, a second campus for boys opened in Huntersville. In the late 1970s, people recognized the need for a similar setting for girls and began consolidating programs. In the late 1980s, the organization became Boys & Girls Homes of North Carolina. A non-profit charitable organization, the homes continue to provide shelter, food, clothing, education, emotional support and guidance.

"It Made a Difference to That One" details Peacock's quest in persuading people to help, telling how volunteers secured property and built homes at Lake Waccamaw in southeastern North Carolina. Chapters cover life at the Homes, leaders such as Lester Craft and R.N. McCray, and the passionate involvement by civic clubs including the Civitans, Lions, Jaycees, Rotary, Women's Clubs and Optimists.

More than 3,500 kids have walked through these doors. They study, work and play together as they did 50 years ago. Historically, spiritual development has been a strong component and devotional meetings are still held on campus. The Exhibition Center, a 50,000-square-foot facility, hosts gospel, bluegrass, theater performances, car shows, rodeos, wild game cook-offs and more.

"It Made a Difference to That One" was compiled by the Homes staff and alumni. It contains 90 photographs and 80 pages and was published by Donning Company Publishers of Virginia Beach, Va. Copies sell for \$29.95 each, plus \$2.10 state sales tax (totaling \$35.60). Shipping adds \$3.55.

Send payments to Boys & Girls Homes of NC, Inc., Attention: Pictorial History, P.O. Box 127, Lake Waccamaw, NC 28450. To find out more, call (910) 646-3083, ext. 218, or visit www.boysandgirlshomesofnc.com

—Karen House



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Not Exactly Flying Colors

Stories of how you almost flunked

Not everyone has a story about how they almost flunked. Only people like those whose stories are published here—people like me.

I'm the kind of guy who in 5th grade would wait until my buddy Luke Good, who sat next to me, would leave his desk so I could grab the book he was reading, remove the bookmark and place it to some earlier page, so it would look to our teacher, Mrs. Weidman, that I was further along in my book than Luke was in his. By the time I reached 11th grade, seven or so years later, I signed up for Mr. Rankin's Advanced Placement class in modern European history, thinking it would help me get into college. What would have helped me get into college was doing the assigned reading in that class, which I did once in a while, so that when taking the AP exam at the end of the term I actually could have written about European history instead of the three-page, handwritten sob story I wrote detailing why I'd forgotten everything. It was a good thing that college allowed me to take one pass-fail course per semester, because cramming for four hours the night before the final exam was enough to "pass" Astronomy 101, an 8 a.m. M-W-F class I never attended all semester. (I was reading European history at breakfast and just lost track of time.)

As you'll see in the stories here, we all learned to mend our ways.

Thanks to everyone who submitted stories. I wish we had space to publish more of them.

—Michael E.C. Gery, editor

How to describe a biology project

I took college-prep biology in the 10th grade, and it went OK until baseball season. We would travel for games, and I would often miss my afternoon biology class. We were required to do a science project, and I won't say what mine was except to say it was lame. An oral presentation was required to receive a passing grade. Each student was called out at random to present their project. When my name was called I walked to the front of the class totally unprepared with no idea what I was going to say. Seriously, my project was lame.

I turned, faced my classmates and introduced my project. At that moment, another teacher came in to our class and went to the back of the room to talk to my teacher. I noticed that my teacher was not paying attention to me, so I just began to mumble a bunch of nonsense syllables and ever so often I would interject a "and that was a result of" or "therefore" and continue mumbling. The class began to laugh. Everyone kept looking back at the teacher because they could not believe that I was getting away with babbling. When the visitor left our room and my teacher turned her attention back to me, I simply said, "And that was my project. Any questions?" The teacher said thank you, and I sat down. I received a 90 on my science project!

Michael Allen / Indian Trail / Union Power Cooperative

How low can you go?

At 15 years old, I made what I thought was a good decision. I was going to "make" my parents appreciate the good grades I was making, even though they were not as good as my sister's. I was tired of hearing their so-called encouragement that I could do better. They would say, "Your sister got an A in that subject and you only got an A-minus."

So, upon entering the 10th grade, I began my project to see just how bad a grade I could make and still not fail. I ended up that year with barely a 70 average in a required subject. That grade was only because I realized what was happening and turned in an excellent term paper.

Since summer school was non-existent back then, my plan to prove something to my parents almost backfired on me. Instead, it proved something to me: My parents may not have used the correct approach to encourage me, but I DEFINITELY did not use the correct approach with my project.

Vera Sheppard / Fayetteville / South River EMC



You can see more stories on this topic and others on our Web site at www.carolinacountry.com. Next month we'll publish stories and pictures of your finest sports moment. (Deadline was July 15.) For this year's remaining themes and rules, see page 20. We'll publish the 2007 themes in September.

8th grade spring fever

At the end of my 8th grade year, I had had enough of school for one year. When testing time came I marked absolutely anything down on the answer sheet rather than even try to read the questions. I had no clue that that was my placement test for 9th grade classes!

About two weeks into the next school year, my teacher accidentally let it slip that my class was the "low" group. I was shocked! There must have been some mistake! I stayed after class and asked the teacher what I could do to get out of that group. She said that actually my teachers had debated over whether to even let me go on to 9th grade with my low test scores.

I decided that day that I would make the highest grades in my section and that I would consider schoolwork more seriously in the future. I learned that always doing my best was important.

Penny Graham / Lake James / Rutherford EMC

How to become an editor

It was around this time five years ago—I was in the 5th grade. Two other students and I were called to the office. I was curious, but I didn't really care. In the office there was a teacher and a principal. I found out that I wasn't going to pass 5th grade without passing the writing test. From then on, the two other students and I were taught outside of class how to write. It was embarrassing, but I wanted to pass. I didn't want to be in the 5th grade for two years.

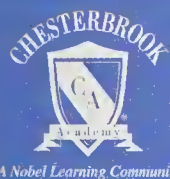
Then, it was time for me to take the writing test. A few days later, my teacher called me to the front of the class and announced that I had passed the writing test. The whole class clapped for me. Now, in 10th grade, I am the editor of the school's literary magazine.

Elise Shim / Matthews / Butler High School

The Typing I race

When I was in high school, I was an exceptional student. I breezed through biology, chemistry, algebra and trigonometry classes, making A's with ease. However, I had trouble with Typing I. Unlike some of my friends who took the six-week typing course, I took the full-blown, year-long version. I enjoyed typing, but I tried to key too fast. Grades were determined by timed writings. I consistently got "A/F." The A was for speed, the F for accuracy. Sitting there listening to the keys of the manual uprights clack around me was like being in a foot race. Their keys sounded faster than my keys, I thought. So, no amount of self-discipline could get my fingers to slow down. Conversely, my brain could not speed up enough to get the right directions to my fingers. I made a D on the exam, but I passed the course.

Sheila Cranford / Denton / Randolph EMC



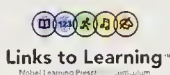
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My brush with death

By the time I reached the 3rd grade, I came to a startling conclusion: I stunk at math. Throughout the rest of my school career, I struggled to make good grades when it came to numbers. I finally reached my lowest point during my freshman year in high school. During second quarter, we received progress reports. I had an F! Stunned and upset, I decided there was something I had to do to pass.

I studied and did all of my homework. When the end of the quarter rolled around, I received a C. I was overjoyed! After my brush with death, I worked hard to change my grade, and I did.

Almost flunking is scary, but as long as you work hard to change it and to improve, you can do it.

Rachel Sult / Matthews / Butler High School

Driver's training and cooking

It was June 1956, and I was in my last semester of college, which included taking driver's training and cooking classes. I also was planning my wedding, commuting an hour each way and working part-time at the Buffalo Evening News taking classified ads. To say I was spread pretty thin would be an understatement.

My fiancé was graduating from the Naval Academy in Annapolis in the middle of my exams, so I took some books along to study. After returning to Buffalo, N.Y., I finished taking my exams, practiced (for the first time) driving the car in which I'd be taking my driving test, and put the finishing touches on our wedding which was to occur June 30.

Not surprisingly I didn't do well on my exams. In fact, I was very worried about not graduating. We were moving 3,000 miles away so it was imperative that I graduate. I talked to the one professor whose exam I was pretty sure I flunked. As a result I managed to graduate, passed the driver's test and even baked a loaf of bread! The wedding was lovely and lasting, as we're about to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary.

Joan Macdonald / Brevard / Haywood EMC

"Tactics" and love

While attending Naval Officer Candidate School, the required "Tactics" course nearly led me to flunk out of the program and destroy my self esteem. Each week we were tested, and I would believe I had easily passed. However, the resulting score would be below 20 points out of a possible 100! Concerned, I studied harder, and even passed up liberty, but I still would fail the following week. The harder I tried, the worse the score.

Near the end of the course, with little chance of recovery, I was resigned to assessing alternative options for my future. My father considered my emotional frame of mind and took a simple approach in an effort to help. He drove my Mom and my girlfriend to the school for the weekend, and he forced me to put aside the books to enjoy the time together. This chance to clear my head and absorb their affection was the catalyst I needed. I never scored under 90 on the remaining tests. I graduated school and eventually taught the subject to others.

The love of others is powerful medicine.

Larry Holland / Taylorsville / EnergyUnited

Machine shop & blueprints at night

Having the best mother in the world, I was encouraged right after high school (1981) to continue my education. As it was, I was working third shift in a textile plant six nights a week. I knew my mother was giving good advice, so I decided to sign up for machine shop and blueprint classes four nights a week (a two-year course) at the local community college. The class was from 6 until 10 p.m.

Being loyal to my mother's wishes, I committed myself not to miss any work or any classes. Needless to say, after the first four months I was a very tired person. I got out of school at 10 p.m., and I had to report to work at 11:45 p.m. I lived quite a few miles from work and school, and I soon discovered that by the time I drove home from school it was basically time to get back in the car to drive to work. To help solve this problem, and to get a little more much-needed rest, I decided to sleep in the nearby grocery store parking lot from 10:10 until 11:30 p.m. After two years I passed, but it was very close. ☺

Michael Padgett / Union Mills / Rutherford EMC

Send us your best **Earn \$50**

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

October 2006

My Favorite Halloween Costume

Send the story and photo.

Deadline: August 15

November 2006

My Favorite Photo

North Carolina people or places.

If they are digital: 300 dpi and actual printing size.

Deadline: September 15

December 2006

Regifting Mistakes

I should not have given that away.

Deadline: October 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
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PRIVILEGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF CITIZENSHIP

By Michael Atkins Jr.



With the help of Senate President Pro Tempore Marc Basnight, NC 4-H President Samantha Stevens, of Greensboro, presides as "Lieutenant Governor" during a mock debate on the Senate floor.

On June 11–13, 2006, I was one of 120 students from around the state who attended the 4-H Citizenship North Carolina Focus gathering in Raleigh. Twelve of us had attended the same conference in 2005, and I was selected for this year's Leadership Team. Our jobs were to supervise our fellow students, ensure that the workshops ran smoothly, and serve as tour guides at the Legislative Building among other responsibilities. Everyone participated in

hands-on workshops, panel and open discussions to learn about our state government, how to work with public officials, how government affects our daily lives, and how youths can impact the government.

This valuable experience was sponsored by Touchstone Energy cooperatives of North Carolina, the NC 4-H Foundation, and NC 4-H Youth Development, a part of the NC Cooperative Extension.

During the conference, we expressed our own concerns to the North Carolina government officials. They were youth apathy; the lack of a safe place to socialize; teen pregnancy; the threat of drugs and alcohol; the quality, funding and administration of public education; and the lack of youth input in government decisions.

We attended meetings in the Legislative Building and "elected" senators from our respective districts. We also attended a mock Senate meeting, debated our own bill to establish county Youth Councils throughout the state, and voted on other Senate bills. I served as a "freshman senator" under the direction of Senate President Pro Tempore Marc Basnight.

At the Touchstone Energy Legislative Breakfast attended by state senators and members of the House of Representatives, we sat alongside politicians from our districts.

One of the most important parts of Citizenship North Carolina was for us to learn about the three branches of the state government. I was amazed to find that some students

know so little about their local and state governments. The workshops opened many of our eyes to the complexity of government entities. There were workshops on how we can get people in the local area involved in our projects and about how to approach officials at the local and state levels of government. We learned that it is important to know what issues our communities face and what we as young people can do to make a difference. We played roles to practice introducing ourselves to legislators and present our concerns and possible solutions to them. We learned that legislators are easy to approach and willing to listen.

After the 2005 Citizenship North Carolina conference, I put what I learned into action by personally inviting Congressman Walter B. Jones and state Rep. Louis Pate Jr. to speak at my school. They both accepted my invitation, and later encouraged me to serve as a page for them. I have remained in contact with them and personally met other local and state politicians. Other politicians have visited my school and attended functions of importance to me.

I will enter my sophomore year at Charles B. Aycock High School in Pikeville this fall, where I am a member of Show Choir and the Theater Arts group. I received the award for having the highest academic average in the freshman class. I have been involved in the Wayne County 4-H for more than five years. I have served as treasurer of the Wayne County 4-H Council. This summer I was inducted as the 4-H Southeast District President representing 13 counties in North Carolina. I am active in TRY (Teens Reaching Youth), SESAMM (Students Eating Smart and Moving More), community service, and the summer reading program at the Wayne County Public Library. I have been performing in dramatic productions with the local adult and children's theater groups, the Missoula Traveling Theater group, the ShowStoppers 4-H Drama Club, and the Wayne Community College Foundation for more than seven years. 🍌



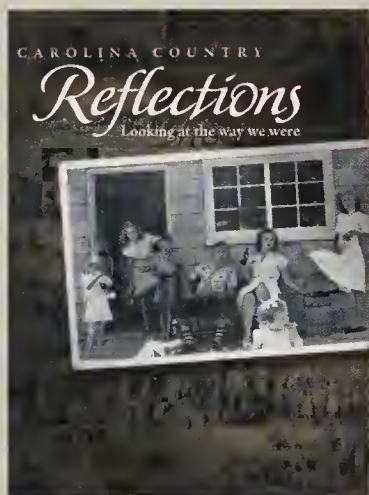
The author Michael Atkins Jr. (left) and his associate Jonathan Stutts (right), both 4-Hers from Wayne County, pose with their state Rep. Louis Pate Jr. during the Legislative Breakfast recently in Raleigh. Atkins and Stutts served as "state senators" during the Citizenship North Carolina conference sponsored by 4-H and Touchstone Energy cooperatives.

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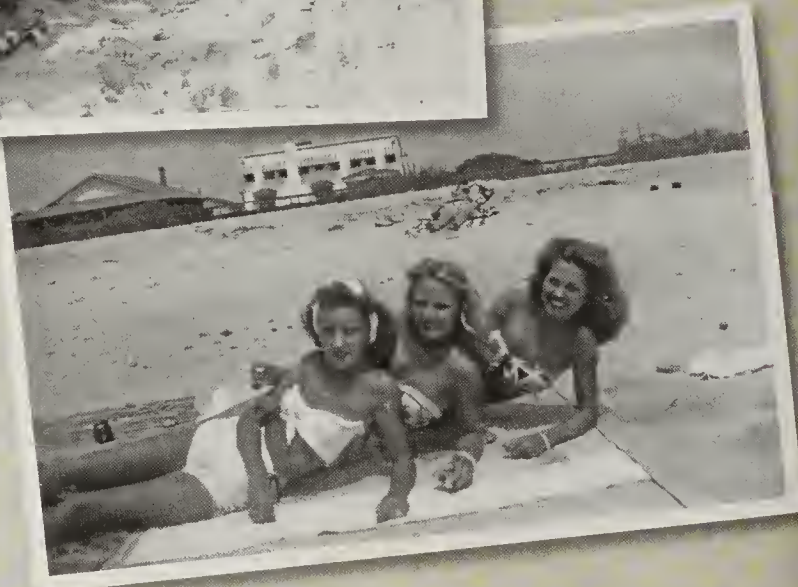
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“First Sunday”

ART BY MARYELLEN JONES

Maryellen Jones lives in Scotland Neck, Halifax County. She grew up in Mary's Chapel and attended Halifax County schools. She studied art at Incarnate Word College in San Antonio, Tex., and Maryland Institute of Art in Baltimore.

Ms. Jones specializes in pen and charcoal but also paints with oils and acrylics. She teaches art at Halifax Community College's Scotland Neck site. She and her students recently presented art for the corridors at Our Community Hospital in Scotland Neck. Her murals can be seen brightening the hallways of the rehabilitation department of Heritage Hospital in Tarboro.

Shown on this page is her work “First Sunday,” an oil painting depicting the inside of Mary's Chapel community church, which held services the first Sunday of each month when she was growing up. The original measures 16 by 20 inches. 

For information about prints or about the artist:

Maryellen Jones

54 Marble Dr.

Scotland Neck, NC 27874

Phone: (252) 826-2146

E-mail: grandgran540@aol.com



Caley's wish was to see real, live dolphins. She came to Hatteras Island this summer to see them. With her were (from left) her brother Billy, her dad Bill and her mom Tracy.

MAKE A WISH:

Dolphins off the Outer Banks

By Michael E.C. Gery

Last summer when Caley Topolnak was 6, she heard her older brother Billy buzz about the great vacation he had on the Outer Banks with their uncle's family. Caley really had hoped to go with him, but she couldn't. She was being treated for leukemia.

Throughout the year—between chemotherapy treatments, spinal taps to check her blood cells, bone marrow exams—Caley kept imagining a summer at the beach. She filled her room at home in Monongahela, Pa., near Pittsburgh, with all kinds of dolphins, wishing some day that she would see a real one.

Her wish came true this summer. She and her family saw dolphins leaping from the waters off Hatteras Island.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation made Caley's dream come true. The foundation grants the wishes of children who have life-threatening medical conditions "to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy."

Caley will be 7 in September and is preparing to enter the 2nd grade. She needs her spinal fluid checked every few months for signs of leukemia cells around her brain or spinal cord. Her illness is acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), a cancer that affects the white blood cells, especially in children. The chemotherapy treatments cause her to lose her hair, and sometimes she gets dizzy. Her mother, Tracy, says when Caley feels like vomiting, she just does it, "and then she laughs and feels much better."

Caley's parents (Bill Topolnak is an ironworker and Tracy is a stay-at-home mom) were thrilled when they learned that Make-A-Wish would send the family on a week's vacation to the Outer Banks. They chose a time in June when Caley would be between treatments and able to enjoy the beach. Make-A-Wish volunteers in Pennsylvania coordinated with volunteers in Dare County, who arranged with Sun Realty to donate an oceanfront house in Avon on Hatteras Island. Make-A-Wish rented them a minivan and sent them on their way.

Bill drove the minivan straight through from Pittsburgh, some 600 miles to Hatteras. (The family remains shy of fly-


ing because the horror of Sept. 11, 2001, occurred on Caley's third birthday.) Sun Realty had contacted Kathy Kiddy, who runs the Locomotion youth program on the island, and Kathy rounded up a real welcome for the Topolnak family. When they entered the sunny, gleaming new beach house, there was a dining room table full of local cheer: beach towels, toys, beachwear, food, tickets to local restaurants, shops and attractions. Churches, businesses, and local organizations, including Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative, contributed to the welcome surprise. "We were overwhelmed," said Tracy.

Russ Kiddy hosted the family on his fishing boat, and Caley amazed everyone by hauling in 11 fish, more than anyone. Capt. Spurgeon Stowe took them out from Hatteras Village to the deep sea on the "Miss Hatteras," and Caley kept looking for dolphins. They sampled a variety of restaurants, and Caley's favorite was the Froggy Dog with its wings and Rice-a-roni. The house's oceanside hot tub was a family favorite. They hit the beach every day, and eventually Caley was able to jump waves all by herself. They fished from the Avon Pier. They visited the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse.

"We will definitely try to come back again next year," Bill Topolnak said.

Caley said she couldn't wait to get home to show her friends all her Outer Banks souvenirs and pictures. She also missed her hamster "Munchy," and the family's two springer spaniels, two cats and all the fish.

And, of course, the family will continue living with the uncertainty and effects of Caley's leukemia. They know that the success rate of its treatments is around 80 percent.

Meanwhile, Caley will be dreaming with her dolphins each night with visions of another Outer Banks vacation in her sights. 



Caley Topolnak
2211 Walch St.
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Candlevision

Paul Hoge Creations sells a variety of seashell candles, odor eliminator candles and odor eliminator sprays. In business since 1975, the Marshville-based company's seashell candles come in 10 colors and seven styles. The 13-ounce jar candle boasts a 55-hour burn time. Candle fragrances include gingerbread, mulberry and a blend of cucumber melon. A set of three seashell candles sells for \$24.95. The company's store, Candle Factory Store, is in Marshville and open daily, or you can order online.

(800) 252-6353
www.candlevision.com



Joan's Sourdough Bread

Blue Ridge EMC member Joan Knox started baking her own bread when she couldn't find good sourdough bread for herself and her husband, Henry. Now her state-certified bakery in Lenoir produces six varieties of sourdough bread. The bakery also sells homemade fried pies, including blackberry, blueberry and strawberry half-moon pies. The plain sourdough loaf sells for \$3.50 and a jalapeno sourdough loaf sells for \$4. The pies sell for \$2 each.

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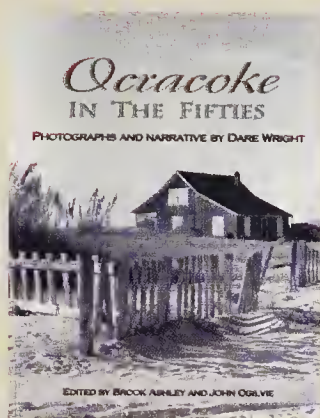
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on the bookshelf

"Ocracoke in the Fifties"

This book of photography and narrative of Ocracoke Island's landmarks and legends reveals the unique island culture in the 1950s. The Ocracoke Lighthouse, the British Cemetery, pony herds, white picket fences, weathered fishermen, barefoot children—all are portrayed vividly in black and white photographs. The author of 19 children's books, Dare Wright also took the photographs. Published by John F. Blair in Winston-Salem. Softcover, \$19.95, 112 pages.

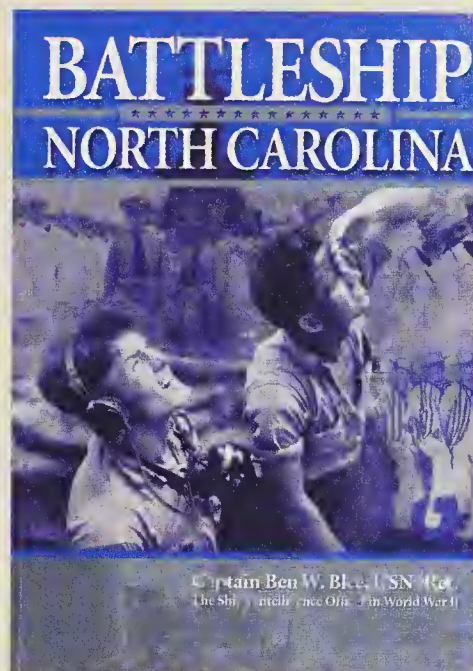
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"Battleship North Carolina"

This second edition expands well beyond the original 1982 publication. New features include officer and crew stories, a section devoted to explaining daily life at sea, a foldout map of the ship's Pacific Ocean operations, additional details on the ship's design and wartime operations and more photographs, charts and illustrations. The author, Capt. Ben W. Blee, USN, is one of the ship's World War II intelligence officers and twice chairman of the USS North Carolina Battleship Commission. Published by Battleship North Carolina in Wilmington. Softcover, \$19.95, 172 pages.

(910) 251-5797
www.battleshipnc.com



"The Time Keeper"

Diagnosed with terminal cancer at age 38, Linda Wails has only one dying wish—to make amends with her 17-year-old son Corey. For years they have struggled in their relationship but it's now or never to learn anew what it means to be a mother and what it means to be a son. The novel is by Kevin Cropp, who lives in Wilmington and Raleigh. Published by Copper Press of Raleigh. Softcover, \$14, 235 pages.

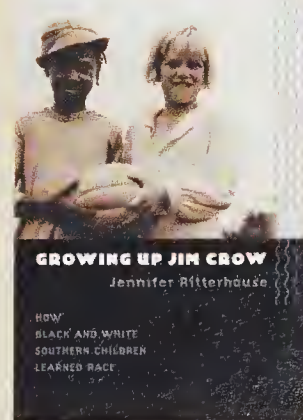
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"Growing Up Jim Crow"

In the segregated South, unwritten rules of everyday behavior governed how individuals stood, sat, drank, walked, talked and made eye contact. In "Growing Up Jim Crow: How Black and White Children Learned Race," author Jennifer Ritterhouse explores the ways in which children learned about race, in terms of the racial roles they were expected to play in public and in their sense of themselves as being of a particular race. Ritterhouse analyzes adults' prescriptive writings about children and reviews children's literature and reports of children in segregated settings. Through these methods, as well as autobiography and oral history, she shows how kids realized the "etiquette" of race relations and sheds new light on questions of change and continuity in the South. Softcover, 320 pages, \$19.95. Published by The University of North Carolina Press in Chapel Hill.

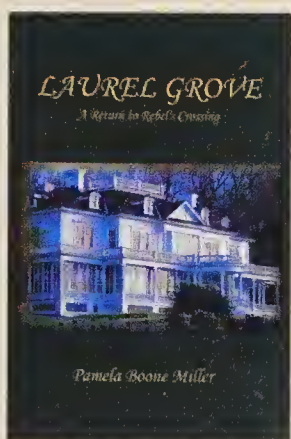
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From Ann Latimer, Emerald Isle

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- ... Your uncle dared you to hold your hand in the mountain spring water five minutes for five dollars, and you couldn't do it.
- ... You can tell the difference between the call of a whippoorwill and a chuck-will's-widow.
- ... You cried in relief when your daddy's bird dog found his way back home, dragging a chewed rope around his neck.

From Steve Frye, Beaufort (formerly of Lexington)

- ... You know that Arthur Smith's group was the Crackerjacks.
- ... You know that Brother Ralph and Cousin Phud were the "Counselors of the Airwaves."
- ... You worked as an offbearer in a sawmill.
- ... You've been a sacker in the back of a combine.

From Paul Stinson, Stallings

- ... You lined up on Saturday night at the Center Theater to see "Abbot and Costello."
- ... Your papa made good blackberry wine and used it only for stomach aches.
- ... Your mama said papa had more stomach aches after the wine was made.
- ... In the wintertime you smelled a little rank by Saturday when you bathed in a big wash tub by an open fireplace with the fire blazing to heat your water in a big black kettle.

From Norma Jean Auman, Asheboro

- ... You were watching "The Rifleman" on Saturday night and your dad said, "Set down over yonner or I'm gonna whoop your hine en."
- ... You couldn't wait for the feed truck to deliver once a month so you could climb on it and pick out the prettiest feed sacks for your next dress.
- ... You walked a mile to Auman's Corner Store on Sunday afternoon to buy an RC Cola for a nickel, BB Bats and Mary Jane candy for a penny each.

From Jane Oliver, Creston

- ... You played the game of pulling the heads off violets by hooking the flowers together. Whoever pulled off the head won.
- ... You can make a sound like a crow by putting a long blade of grass between your thumbs, then blowing through your hands.
- ... You held the cow's tail while your mom milked it so the tail wouldn't slap her in the face.

From Tammey Bentley, Watauga County

- ... You toted your groceries home from the Smithey store in a poke bag.
- ... You used the same poke bag (wet, folded and stuck up under your upper lip) to stop a nose bleed.
- ... You knew you were in big trouble when your mama hollered out your full name.
- ... You know that having money "put back" means you have a savings account.
- ... You've seen the Brown Mountain Lights.
- ... You know what "messin' and gom-min'" means.
- ... Your grandpa treated your bee stings with tobacco juice from the Red Man he chewed.

From Betty Duncan, Winston-Salem

- ... You know not to eat ice cream too fast, because it will freeze the roof of your mouth so you can't tell what flavor it is.
- ... You carry a load of wood, stacked from your waist to your chin, to put in the old iron cookstove, then scoop the ashes in a bucket to dump outside on the compost pile.
- ... Once in a coon's age your mom took you to the corner store and let you buy a 5-cent Nehi orange pop that you tried to make last all day.
- ... Your grandpa's knees buckle but his belt won't.

From Bill Bailey, Greensboro (formerly of Thomasville)

- ... You went to Aunt Annie's house and slept in that cold, cold room where you layered quilts on to the point that you couldn't move.
- ... You could skip stones on the lake and get more skips than anyone else, because you knew the secret was in the shape of the rock and the angle you threw it.
- ... Fish nipped your back while you were swimming in the lake.
- ... You know the smell of the corn that you throw to the chickens as they make low contented sounds until they started fightin' over a pile of corn.

From Lil Davis, Canton

- ... You carved your first boyfriend's name in a tree.
- ... You raked leaves in the fall and shoveled snow in the winter to earn change for a banana split.
- ... You swam the stream with your friends, then look to see who would have the most leeches on your body when you came out.
- ... During World War II you saved all of the tinfoil wrappers to roll into a ball to get into the movies free on Saturdays.
- ... Your mom put cardboard cut-outs in your shoes when you wore holes in them.
- ... You yelled and touched "Gotcha Last."
- ... At school you made your own paste out of flour and water.
- ... You walked a mile with your wagon to the nursery to buy your mama Easter plants with your own money from shoveling snow.

From Douglas Mozingo, Stantonsburg

- ... You learned to swim in the creek with two gourds, one under each arm in a gunny sack.
- ... You stacked hay on a pole in the field, then put bags on the top to keep the rain off.
- ... Daddy gave you 35 cents to go to the movies on Saturday evening and you could even get popcorn and a Pepsi.
- ... You worked at a filling station 60 hours a week and earned \$35.
- ... You waited until your grandpa came out of the barn so you could sneak in there and take a sip of his grape wine.
- ... You couldn't wait to go to the store with Papa so you could get candy called "7 for a penny."
- ... You sat on a piece of wood on saw benches so your ma and pa could saw it up for the cookstove and heater.
- ... You would cut "liddard splinters" from a pine stump and limbs to use for starting "fars."

From Caroline Higgs, Franklinton

- ... You have to explain everything to your Yankee husband. 🗺

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Getting To Know...

Nicholas Sparks

Born: In Omaha, Neb., Dec. 31, 1965

Known for: A best-selling novelist with books including "The Notebook," "Message in a Bottle," and "Nights in Rodanthe."

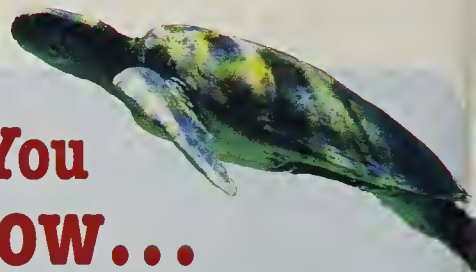
Accomplishments: Sparks completed high school in Fair Oaks, Calif., as valedictorian in 1984. He received a full scholarship for track to the University of Notre Dame. After breaking the school record as part of a relay team (record still stands), Sparks was injured and spent the summer recovering. During this time, he wrote his first novel, though it was never published. After graduating in 1988, Sparks met his wife, Catherine, and they married the following year. While he and his wife lived in Sacramento, Sparks wrote his second novel, also not published. In 1990, he worked with Olympic gold medalist Billy Mays on a book published by Feather Publishing and Random House. In 1992, Sparks relocated to North Carolina and two years later wrote "The Notebook." Warner acquired book rights, and it was published in 1996. "Message in a Bottle" followed and was published in 1998 with "A Walk to Remember" in 1999. Movie versions of these novels were also produced. Since 1999, Sparks has had nine additional novels published, the most recent being "Dear John," which will be available this fall. Sparks, his wife and their five children live in New Bern.



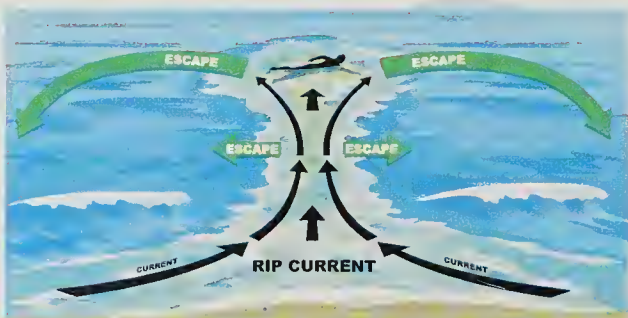
Do You Know...

sea turtles are an endangered species?

They face lots of dangers along the North Carolina coast, everything from environmental pollution to boat propellers cutting their flippers. During sea turtles' nesting season (May 15 through Aug. 15), female turtles come up onto our beaches to lay their eggs. About two months later, usually under cover of darkness, hatchlings emerge to make their way out to the ocean. The North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores is offering turtle "Night Treks" for the public Wednesday evenings on August 2 & 9. Participants search the beach for nesting loggerheads and hatchlings and learn about sea turtles' fascinating habits. Fee is \$5 per person. Call (252) 247-4003 or visit www.ncaquariums.com/turtletrails



BREAK THE GRIP OF THE RIP!



Rip currents, the leading surf hazard for all beachgoers, are powerful, channeled currents of water flowing away from shore. They can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea. Rip

current speeds are typically 1–2 feet per second, but speeds as high as 8 feet per second have been measured (faster than an Olympic swimmer can sprint)! NOAA's National Weather Service, National Sea Grant College Program, North Carolina Sea Grant and the United States Lifesaving Association have joined up to fight rip current deaths. Their campaign has helped communities such as Rodanthe, Waves and Salvo on the Outer Banks in installing signs and educating the public. To find out more, visit <http://ripcurrents.noaa.gov/index.shtml>

In the meantime, play it smart at the beach and follow these guidelines:

- Whenever possible, swim at a lifeguard-protected beach.
- Never swim alone.
- Learn how to swim in the surf. It's not the same as swimming in a pool or lake.
- Stay at least 100 feet away from piers and jetties. Permanent rip currents often exist alongside these structures.

Growing Green Hair from seeds

These funny-faced, "flowerpot friends" will really grow on you. You can put the pots indoors at a window or outside on a porch.

Materials:

- Terra-Cotta pots
- Acrylic craft paints and paintbrushes
- Potting soil
- Grass seed

Directions:

- 1) Paint a face on one side of your pot.
- 2) Pour soil in the pots until it is 1 inch from the top. Generously sprinkle grass seeds on top, then water.
- 3) Water daily, and watch the bright green "hair" grow!



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chuckle

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come before a horse?

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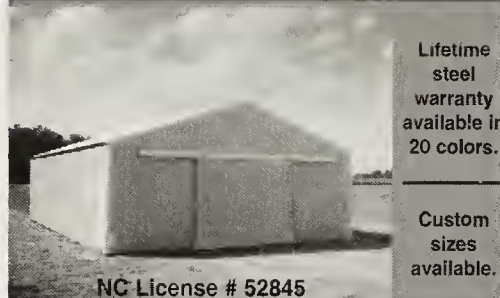
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Miss Fitts

Say Watt?

Cy Nical says, "Two can live as cheaply as one, _____

_____."

O	S	A	O	F
U	T	I	I	N
C	E	M	T	E
N	A	H	O	F

Starting with an I and ending with an N, can you spell out the seven missing words in this sentence? You can move in any direction—left, right, up, down or diagonally. Use each letter once.

UNSCRAMBLIT

The town of _____ in
_____ ve i sotl
Camden County got its
name from a tavern there
in the 18th century.

Use the capital letters in the code clue below to fill in the blanks above.

"TRPOL DA" means
solve it



What is a "palindrome"?

A r b a c m s at the e u l a n u m?

Use the capital letters in the code clue below to fill in the blanks above.

"ACDEFINRTV" means
unscramble

WORD

ward-wary-pray

PLAY

To go from SPEED to DIAL you must change one letter or drop one letter in each step. Letters can be rearranged in any step. Your answer may be different from mine.

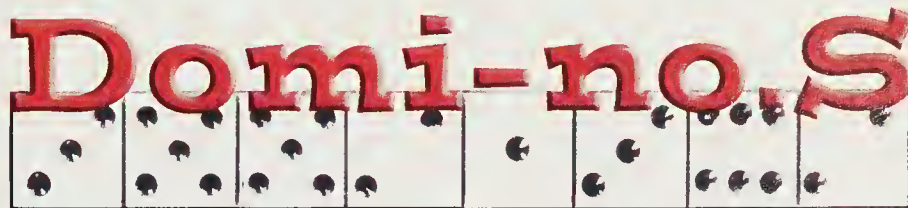
1 S P E E D

2 _ _ _ _

3 _ _ _ _

4 _ _ _ _

5 D I A L



S	E	V	E	N
3	3			

X

E
3

=

E	I	G	H	T
3				

Letters stand for digits in this multiplication problem. Given E=3, you can change SEVEN to EIGHT with E's.

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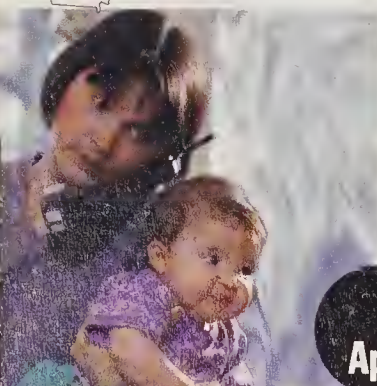
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\$150,000	\$887.31	30 YR. Fixed	5.87*	5.99%
\$200,000	\$1,104.41	5 YR ARM	5.25***	5.39%
\$200,000	\$666.50	Power Arm	1.25***	6.52%

* Fixed Rate conforming loans for 70 LTV rate/term refinance/purchase transactions. ** Interest Only home equity loan, 80 LTV. Interest only payments for up to 10 years. Principle payments can be made at any time without penalty. *** ARM loans for 70 LTV rate/term refinance/purchase transactions. Power Arm payment adjusts annually while rate adjusts monthly. All rates and terms subject to differ as market conditions change. Other Rates, Terms and Products available. Call about Cash Out, Debt Consolidation, JUMBO Loans and more.



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Miss Fitts

OLD TRAP

UNSCRAMBLIT

IF ONE OF THEM IS A TOUCAN

Say Watti?

JOYNER'S CORNER ANSWERS:

August Events



Come and celebrate the 21st Annual Watermelon Festival in historic Murfreesboro from August 2–5, and enjoy a complimentary slice of the state's finest watermelons. The theme will be a celebration of music with special guest Randy Parton.

MOUNTAINS

Street Dances

Mondays, Hendersonville
(800) 828-4244
www.historichendersonville.org

Music on Main Street

Fridays, Hendersonville
(800) 828-4244
www.historichendersonville.org

Chickling Ivories concert

Aug. 4, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787

Lenoir Cruise-In

Aug. 5, Lenoir
(828) 726-0323

Mokey Bear's Birthday Party

Aug. 5, Brevard
(828) 877-3130
www.cradleofforestry.org

Asheville Quilt Show

Aug. 4–6, Asheville
(828) 665-2492
www.ncarboretum.org

Fun in the Park

Aug. 12, Blowing Rock
(800) 295-7851

Bearfoot Bluegrass

Aug. 12, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787

Candlelight Ghost Tours

Aug. 12, Wilkesboro
(336) 667-3171

Cruisin' & Jammin'

Aug. 18, Blowing Rock
(800) 295-7851

Lenoir Cruise-In

Aug. 19, Lenoir
(828) 726-0323

Annual Fines Creek Bluegrass Jam

Aug. 25–26, Waynesville
(828) 627-6396

Cruso Quilt Show

Aug. 25–26, Canton
(828) 235-8111

Annual Bluegrass Fiddlers Convention

Aug. 26, Love Valley
(336) 764-2220
www.lovevalley.com

Rods in the Park

Aug. 26, Linville
(828) 963-2723

Emile Pandolfi Concert

Aug. 26–27, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787

PIEDMONT

Wake Forest Farmers' Market

Saturdays, Wake Forest
(919) 556-1579
www.wakeforestmarket.org

Beyond the Pulpit

Aug. 1–5, High Point
(336) 885-1859
www.highpointmuseum.org

Palomino Ranch Bull Riding

Aug. 4–5, Lowgap
(336) 352-4335
www.rodeos.8k.com

Dewey Murphy

Aug. 5, Mineral Springs
(803) 329-3833

Music at Reno's

Aug. 5, Pittsboro
(919) 542-8401

Before Washing Machines

Aug. 5–6, High Point
(336) 885-1859
www.highpointmuseum.org

New Hope Valley Railway Train Rides

Aug. 6, New Hill
(919) 362-5416
www.nhvry.org

Lexington Cruise-In

Aug. 8, 22, Lexington
(336) 249-1531

Exotic Eats:

Exploring foreign food

Aug. 8, High Point
(336) 885-1859
www.highpointmuseum.org

N.C. Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

Aug. 10–13, Durham
(919) 560-3030
www.carolinatheatre.org/ncglff

"Smoke on the Mountain"

Aug. 11–26, Littleton
(877) 330-0574
www.lakelandartscenter.org

Cedar Lake &

Tim Norris Family

Aug. 12, Mineral Springs
(803) 329-3833

Gold Panning Competition

Aug. 12, Midland
(704) 721-4653
www.reedmine.com

Triad Highland Games

Aug. 18–19, Greensboro
(336) 431-8482

"It's a Gas" Car Show

Aug. 19, Lexington
www.itsagascarshow.com

Mother Daughter Tea Party

Aug. 19, High Point
(336) 885-1859
www.highpointmuseum.org

Butterfly Show

Aug. 19, Durham
(919) 220-5429
www.ncmls.org

Amazing Maize Maze

Aug. 26, Huntersville
(704) 875-3113
www.ruralhillfarm.org

"Ride for Adult Education"

Aug. 26, Hamlet
(910) 997-9129 or
(910) 266-8146

Lino Verna



Two-year-old Jack Spatz rides his first train with his father Ian at the New Hope Valley Railway. Located between Bonsal and New Hill, the 100-year-old railway offers monthly "ride days" (May–November, first Sundays), and other special events. The next ride day is Sunday, August 6. In addition to the ride, check out the miniature railroad layout (6,685 square feet!) and enjoy a barbecue lunch. To learn more, visit www.nhvry.org, call (919) 362-5416 or e-mail info@nhvry.org

COAST

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Thursdays, Corolla
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Summer Concert Series

Saturdays, Morehead City
(252) 726-5083

Annual Watermelon Festival

Aug. 2–5, Murfreesboro
(252) 398-5922

Outdoor Expo

Aug. 4–6, New Bern
(252) 638-8101
www.visitnewbern.com

Lost Colony Choir Recital

Aug. 6, Roanoke Island
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Virtual Tour of Cape Lookout

Aug. 11, Beaufort
(252) 728-7317

Carolista Music Festival

Aug. 19, Manteo
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Barbara Bailey Hutchison, singer/songwriter

Aug. 25–26, Roanoke Island
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Flavor of the Past: Sounds of Wilmington

Aug. 26, Wilmington
(910) 798-4362
www.capefearmuseum.com/flavor_of_the_past.htm

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MOUNTAINS

Brevard Music Center Festival

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Brevard Music Center
(888) 384-8682
www.brevardmusic.org

"Horn in the West"

Historic Outdoor Drama
Through Aug. 12, Boone
(828) 264-2120
www.horninthewest.com

"Unto These Hills"

Through Aug. 19, Cherokee
Cherokee Historical
Association
(828) 497-2111
www.cherokee-nc.com

"Early Toys & Games"

Through September
Kings Mountain
Kings Mountain Historical
Museum
(704) 739-1019

Postcards from the Edge

Through Sept. 2
West Jefferson
Ashe Arts Center
(336) 846-2787

"NASCAR Inspired"

Through Sept. 17, Hickory
Hickory Museum of Art
(828) 327-8576
www.hickorymuseumofart.org

PIEDMONT

"A Focus on Sports"

Through Aug. 15, Charlotte
Charlotte Museum of History
(704) 568-1774
www.charlottemuseum.org

"Life & Work of Walter & Dorothy Auman"

Through Aug. 26, Seagrove
N.C. Pottery Center
(336) 873-8430
www.ncpotterycenter.com

"Art Unleashed"

Through August,
Winston-Salem
Winston-Salem Visitors Center
(866) 728-4200
www.visitwinstonsalem.com

"Magic Web"

Aug. 12–Oct. 8, Durham
Museum of Life & Science
(919) 220-5429
www.ncmls.org

"Smokey Joe's Café"

Aug. 17–Sept. 10, Sanford
Temple Theatre
(919) 774-4512
www.templeshows.com

"Self/Image"

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Winston-Salem
Reynolda House Museum
(336) 758-5580

Spanish Colonial Art

Through Sept. 10, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Art
(704) 337-2000
www.mintmuseum.org

"Treasures from the Past"

Through Sept. 16, Oxford
Granville County Museum
(919) 693-9706



Listing Information

Deadlines: For October: August 24 | For November: September 24

Submit Listings Online:

Visit www.carolinacountry.com and click "See NC" to add your event to the magazine and/or our Web site. Or e-mail events@carolinacountry.com

COAST

Roanoke Island Summer Festival
Through Aug., Manteo
Roanoke Island Festival Park
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com


"Blackbeard: Knight of the Black Flag"
Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays
Through Aug. 19, Bath
Ormond Amphitheatre
(252) 923-4171
www.ormondamphitheatre.com

History, Arts and Fun
Aug. 1-31, Manteo
Roanoke Island Festival Park
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

"Flip it, Fold it, Figure it out"
Through Sept. 4, Wilmington
Cape Fear Museum of History
(910) 341-4350
www.capefearmuseum.com

Rick Beck: Form
Through Oct. 29, Wilmington
Louise Wells Cameron Art Museum
(910) 395-5999
www.cameronartmuseum.com

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Visitors can enjoy an array of outdoor activities at the Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge including kayaking, fishing, hiking, bird watching and photography.

Camden County
Albemarle EMC territory



Founded in 1777, Camden County is nestled on the shores of the Albemarle Sound, adjacent to the Outer Banks and coastal Virginia. Known for its agriculture and waterways, Camden County is a quiet retreat. Bird watchers, photographers and fishermen find plenty of nature on the Pasquotank and North rivers, as well as the Dismal Swamp and Albemarle Sound. Points of interest include the Camden County Heritage Museum, the Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge, the Intracoastal Waterway and Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center. Camden County is also home to Milford, the oldest known two-story brick house in North Carolina with a construction date of 1746. Additionally, the oldest Baptist church in North Carolina, Shiloh Baptist, is in Camden. The church was built approximately 120 years ago and has survived five wars. Other historic buildings include the Camden Courthouse and old jail, as well as the Abbott House and McBride Church.

Three top spots:

Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center is the only welcome center in the continental U.S. greeting guests by land and water. Scenic Highway 17 and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway lead visitors to the banks of the Dismal Swamp, just three miles south of the Virginia border. The Dismal Swamp Canal is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. The oldest man-made waterway in the United States, the canal was completed in 1805. Facilities include clean restrooms, picnic tables, grills, travel and lodging information, as well as a friendly staff to assist with visitor inquiries and ferry reservations. (877) 771-8333

Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is located 40 miles away from the welcome center and is a great place for hiking, biking, bird watching, boating, fishing and photography. Created to protect and preserve a unique ecosystem, the refuge consists of more than 111,000 acres of forested wetland and expansive wildlife. (757) 986-3705

Camden County Heritage Museum documents the history of Camden County with changing exhibits that explore the local logging industry, the Dismal Swamp Canal and the Civil War. The museum is located in the former Camden County jail and includes history of the building, incarceration methods and law enforcement. The second story cells have been restored and are open to the public. (252) 338-1919

Learn of other nearby adventures and events:

www.albemarle-nc.com/camden



Poison ivy bears leaflets in clusters of three. The leaves have pointed tips, and the edges may be smooth or toothed.

Outsmarting Poison Ivy

About 85 percent of people will have an allergic reaction when they touch the sap of poison ivy, according to the American Academy of Dermatology. That can amount to a lot of collective misery. It is sometimes hard to avoid the plant, especially when you need to eradicate it from infested areas. It's also possible to get the oils in the sap (which contain the offending chemical, urushiol) on your skin through indirect contact, such as from clothing, tools or even your pets. If you must work near or in patches of poison ivy, take precautions. Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirt, gloves and boots. Apply protective "barrier" creams (sold over-the-counter) to the face or other exposed skin. If you have a run-in, use these tips:

- ▶ Clean the affected areas immediately, as the chemical penetrates the skin within minutes. Plain water might stave off absorption until you can get to soap and a sink. (For good measure, carry individually packaged alcohol wipes in your pocket.)
- ▶ Wipe boots (and other unwashables) with alcohol thoroughly and wash all outerwear. Oil can remain potent on clothing, shoes and other objects for years.
- ▶ If you don't break out right away, don't assume that you're immune to the chemical and become careless. A rash may not appear until 12 to 48 hours after exposure. Also, even if you've never had allergic reactions in the past, it doesn't mean you won't develop a sensitivity in the future.

- ▶ If you're using rubber gloves, wear cotton gloves underneath. This will provide a failsafe in case the rubber tears.
- ▶ A rash caused from poison ivy will not spread to other parts of the body or to another person. It may seem to though since differences in the character (i.e., thickness) of the skin on various parts of the body may result in delayed eruption. The oil, however, will spread if it's not properly removed.

Creative Composting

Coffee grounds, eggshells, vegetable scraps, grass clippings, leaves and manure are like jet fuel to a compost pile. You can even add "nontraditional" ingredients like dryer lint and pet hair. If your household doesn't produce the volume of waste you need, be resourceful and collect ingredients. Ask neighbors to save their bagged yard waste for you. Stable owners may let you have manure, especially if you offer to shovel it yourself. Request bags of coffee grounds at a coffee house or restaurant—remember to be polite, and don't show up at rush hour. Tree-removal companies will often give you free wood chips for composting and mulching, especially if they're already working nearby. Be sure you have enough space, as they'll probably have to dump an entire truckload.



Carla Burgess can be reached at ncgardenshare@mindspring.com
For more gardening advice, go to the "Carolina Gardens" section of www.carolinacountry.com

Hort Shorts

- ▶ Divide crowded daylilies to improve flowering and increase your stock. Lift clumps with a garden fork. Shake off dirt and look for natural divisions at the base of the leaf fans. Separate these with a sharp knife or spade. Trim foliage back by about two-thirds and replant individual clumps. You may wish to prune the roots some as well. Don't fret about rough handling. Daylilies are very durable and resilient.
- ▶ To make lawns less susceptible to drought, heat, pests and disease, remove no more than one-third of the stems in a single mowing. If the lawn has become overgrown, mow over several days to return it to the desired height.
- ▶ Leave grass clippings on your lawn or use a mulching mower. They contain vital nutrients and moisture. Clippings are often blamed for thatch build-up, but research has disproved this. Over-fertilizing and letting grass become too tall between mowing are the major culprits.
- ▶ Before selecting trees and shrubs, learn the average height and spread at maturity and site them accordingly. This will save years of pruning and the tendency to butcher them when they encroach on streets, driveways, houses and utility lines.
- ▶ When cooking recipes with fresh garden herbs, use about three times the amount you would use of a dry quantity.
- ▶ Harvest cantaloupes when the fruit slips easily from the stem when tugged gently. Watermelons are ready if you hear a dull thud when you thump the skin.
- ▶ Too many mature cucumbers left on the vine will shut down production of the plant. Pick several times a week to ensure a continuous supply of cucumbers. The same is true of okra.
- ▶ When using a garden hose that has been sitting in the sun, run the water until it's cool before watering plants. ☺

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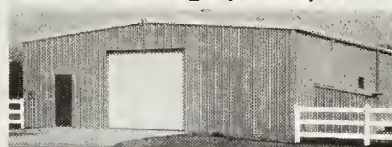


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Make your doors more energy efficient

Doors can be significant areas of energy loss in a home. Many homes have a front door, a back door and a door from an attached garage. When you total up the perimeter length of the doors, you can see how poor-fitting weatherstripping can be a major factor. Front doors and back doors may also often have windows that have low insulation value.

Before attempting any improvements to the doors, carefully inspect each door, especially a wood front door. If the wood is deteriorated or warped, there really is not much you can do but replace it with a new one. Steel or fiberglass doors seldom warp, so they generally can be repaired and upgraded for better energy efficiency.

There is also the matter of air leakage. On a windy day, hold a stick of lighted incense near the weatherstripping and move it around the door perimeter. The trail of smoke will indicate the locations of leaky areas. They may be in just a couple of spots or along one side, so you will not have to replace all the weatherstripping.

Push on the door with your hand to force it to close tighter against the weatherstripping and then check with the incense again. The striker plate in the door frame can get worn over time. If you are lucky, the only problem is that the door is not closing tightly enough to create a good seal. This is most commonly found on the latch side of the door.

The easiest solution to this problem is to remove the old striker plate in the door frame and install an adjustable one. There are two basic designs. One design (Door-Tite) is a die-cast plate with staggered teeth cast into the hole area. When the door closes, the latch will catch on the tooth that holds it most tightly to the weatherstripping.

Another design (Mag Security) uses a two-piece striker plate with detents on the flat surface. One piece fits against the door frame where your old striker plate was mounted. The second piece fits into the door latch, contacts and then locks, and it can be adjusted over the first piece to hold the door tightly closed.

If the doors are old, it would be wise to replace the threshold seal, and perhaps the entire threshold, under the door. Most new doors have the weatherstripping seal attached to the door bottom, but with some older ones the seal is in the threshold on the floor. This can get damaged and crushed after years of foot traffic.

Most thresholds are adjustable. There are usually three or four screws that allow you to move the section immediately under the door up or down. The screw heads may be covered and packed with dirt from years of use, so you might have to pick around to find them. Adjust the threshold up a little to see if that reduces the draft.

If you choose to install a new efficient threshold seal underneath the door, you will have to remove the door from the hinges. The new seal will likely be thicker, so you will have to saw a thin strip off the door bottom for clearance. This is fine for a wood or fiberglass door, but you will not




A new bright brass door bottom seal and threshold saves energy and makes the door more attractive.

be able to do this on a steel door. For a steel door, consider installing an automatic door bottom seal that moves down to touch the threshold just as the door closes.

Old worn hinges can also cause sealing problems. These can make a door hang crooked so the weatherstripping will not seal well. Most home center stores carry an array of hinge sizes that fit almost any door.

The glass in doors is the lowest insulation component. Make a storm pane, using clear acrylic plastic, to cover the glass in the door. This will almost double the insulation value and protect the decorative door glass from the weather.

If you can easily remove the door molding, check to see if there is insulation in the gap around the door frame. If you find none, spray expanding foam insulation in the gap. Wait until it fully expands and hardens before replacing the molding. 

James Dulley is an engineer and syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The following companies offer door improvement products:

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Ice Cream Pretzel Cake

- 1 1/4 cups crushed pretzels
- 6 tablespoons cold butter
- 3/4 cup hot fudge ice cream topping, warmed
- 2 packages (7 1/2 ounces each) chocolate covered miniature pretzels
- 1/2 gallon vanilla ice cream, softened
- 1/4 cup caramel ice cream topping

Place crushed pretzels in a small bowl; cut in butter until crumbly. Press onto the bottom of a greased 9-inch springform pan. Cover and freeze for at least 30 minutes. Spread fudge topping over crust; cover and freeze.

Set aside 16 chocolate covered pretzels for garnish. Place remaining pretzels in a food processor; cover and process until crumbly. Transfer to a large bowl; stir in ice cream. Spread over the fudge topping. Drizzle with the caramel topping. Garnish with the reserved pretzels. Cover and freeze for at least 8 hours or overnight.

Yield: 16 servings



Grilled Cheese Loaf

- 1 package (3 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped green onions with tops
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 loaf (1 pound) French bread, sliced

In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and butter. Add cheese, onions and garlic salt; mix well. Spread on both sides of each slice of bread.

Wrap loaf in a large piece of heavy-duty foil (about 28-by-18-inches); seal tightly. Grill, covered, over medium heat for 8–10 minutes, turning once. Unwrap foil; grill 5 minutes longer.

Yield: 10–12 servings

Pineapple Sirloin Skewers

- 1 can (8 ounces) pineapple chunks
- 6 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 pound boneless beef sirloin steak, cut into 1-inch cubes

Drain pineapple, reserving juice. Refrigerate the pineapple. In a small bowl, combine the pineapple juice, soy sauce, brown sugar, oil, ginger, garlic and pepper. Reserve 1/3 cup marinade for basting and 1/3 cup for serving; cover and refrigerate.

Pour remaining marinade into a large resealable plastic bag; add beef cubes. Seal bag and turn to coat; refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight.

Drain and discard marinade from beef. On metal or soaked wooden skewers, alternately thread beef and pineapple chunks. Grill uncovered over medium heat for 5 minutes on each side or broil 4–7 inches from the heat until beef reaches desired doneness, basting frequently with one portion of reserved marinade. Serve with remaining marinade.

Yield: 4 servings



Winning reader recipe

Almost Heaven Cake

- 1 yellow cake mix
- 1 20-ounce can crushed pineapple
- 1 large box instant vanilla pudding
- 1 8-ounce cream cheese
- 1 16-ounce carton Cool Whip
- 2 cups whole milk

Bake cake as directed on box in a 9-by-13-inch pan. Take out of oven and punch holes in top of cake. Pour pineapple with juice over cake. Mix instant vanilla pudding with 2 cups milk and blend in cream cheese. Pour this over pineapple. Add Cool Whip on top of pudding mix. Cover and refrigerate.

Sybil Harrell, a member of Halifax EMC, will receive \$25 for submitting this recipe.

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